

TRIBUTE TO CORY GARDNER

Madam President, I also want to recognize CORY GARDNER. While we never served on the same committee, I had the pleasure of working with him on a number of issues.

We were able to come together with a group of our colleagues and pass a law designating 9-8-8 as a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. The designation will make it easier for people to access this critically important lifeline when they really need it. I thank CORY for his partnership and leadership on this issue.

CORY also worked diligently to secure the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act last summer. This law permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund and addresses a maintenance backlog on Federal parks and public lands. The Great American Outdoors Act is a real victory for the environment and conservation.

I thank CORY for his service and wish him the best as he leaves the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO MARTHA MCSALLY

Madam President, I also want to thank MARTHA MCSALLY for her service in this Chamber. MARTHA is a veteran of the Air Force and has always been a fighter. In fact, when you say “veteran of the Air Force,” you are really understating her role in the Air Force. She fought to become the first American woman to fly a fighter jet in combat. She fought to become the first American woman to command a fighter squadron in combat, and she continued fighting while a Member of the U.S. Senate.

Indeed, MARTHA was a steadfast champion for the well-being of our servicemembers, military families, and veterans during her time on the Armed Services Committee. She worked to include language in the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act improving the effectiveness of sexual assault investigations in the military and strengthening support for victims.

MARTHA also played a key role in helping enact over 30 provisions in the fiscal year 2020 NDAA to address the systemic crisis of privatized housing and help remedy the mistreatment of military families, and she teamed with Senators TESTER and SULLIVAN to pass legislation enhancing the tools the Department of Veterans Affairs uses to meet the mental health needs of veterans. These accomplishments are only a few examples of the important work MARTHA did here, but they illustrate her wholehearted commitment to bettering the lives of those who do so much for our country.

I attribute all of this great success and achievement—first woman fighter pilot, first woman to lead a squadron in combat, and more—to a simple reason. MARTHA was born and raised in Warwick, RI, right next to my hometown of Cranston, RI. MARTHA’s close relative was the mayor of Cranston. My dad worked as a custodian in the school system. He respected, admired,

and was a friend of Jim Taft. MARTHA’s father was also one of the most respected lawyers in Rhode Island, someone who was a tenacious and bright lawyer. That tradition is carried on by her brother Mark, whom I had the privilege and pleasure to know while I was practicing law in Rhode Island.

It is a wonderful family, and she has brought great distinction to not only the Senate, to not only the State of Arizona, but also to the State of Rhode Island. I wish her the very best going forward.

TRIBUTE TO KAMALA HARRIS

Madam President, finally, while KAMALA HARRIS is not leaving the Senate entirely, I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank her as she moves to her new role as Vice President of the United States and, according to the Constitution, as President of this body.

KAMALA is relentlessly determined to help and support the most vulnerable Americans. She has helped lead the charge to protect Dreamers, expand healthcare coverage, and reform our criminal justice system. KAMALA dedicated her Senate tenure to policies that make America a more equitable country and ensure equal opportunities and rights for communities of color.

KAMALA is also a former prosecutor, and she brought a prosecutor’s incisiveness and grit with her to this body.

She led the case against many of the Trump administration’s most harmful policies and nominees, and I know she will bring that tenacity to the Office of Vice President of the United States.

I also know that she will help guide and heal our Nation as we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

I wish her well as she begins her new role, and I look forward to working with her and President-Elect Biden to meet the many challenges before us.

To all of my colleagues who are departing the Senate, I give you my greatest respect and admiration for your service to your States, to the Senate, and to the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, that the postcloture time on the Atchley nomination expire at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, December 17; further, if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA BEHNKEN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is getting toward the end of the week here. We still have got a lot of work to do in the U.S. Senate, particularly on a relief package and end-of-the-year appropriations. So we are working hard on that.

But I also want to take the opportunity, given it is the end of the week, to do what I consider one of my favorite activities of the entire week each week in the Senate, and that is talking about someone in my State who is making a difference, helping out our communities and making Alaska one of the best States—the best State, in my view—in the country. This is the individual we call the Alaskan of the Week.

So I want to do an acknowledgment to some of our Hill reporters who have taken an interest in the “Alaskan of the Week” each week. I think sometimes because they recognize it is finishing up the week. We are not yet done yet, though. We have a lot of work to do. But I also appreciate them reporting on it because it is just good to see stories about people who are doing good work for their State and their community.

What we try to do with this series, which we have been doing now for a number of years, is to talk about people who don’t always get the recognition that they deserve, people who are making a big difference. You know, Alaska, like really every other State in the country, is experiencing serious challenges right now as a result of COVID-19, but I am confident, just like the rest of the country, we will get through this more resilient than ever.

We have a saying. I certainly love this saying: Tough times don’t last, but tough people do. Americans, Alaskans, North Dakotans are tough, and we are going to get through this.

I would like to introduce our Alaskan of the Week, Linda Behnken, from the gorgeous city of Sitka, AK, in Southeast Alaska. The “Paris of the Pacific,” it is called, Sitka. A fun fact about Sitka, it is the largest city in the United States by land area, encompassing over 4,800 square miles, including water. That is big. The population is fairly big for our State. It is beautiful. If you haven’t been to Sitka, you have got to go. It is gorgeous.

Now, Linda—boy, talk about Linda. Linda is innovative, caring, and she has a deep and abiding commitment to our great State, her community, and to the profession that she has devoted her life to, one that is revered and so important in Alaska, and that is commercial fishing.

For more than 30 years now, Linda has been on a boat catching fish out of Alaska’s waters. It is the best seafood, mind you, in the world. No doubt about that one—wild Alaskan seafood. Not only is she a successful fisherman, which is, of course, a full-time job, she has also worked to ensure that Alaska continues to have sustainable fisheries.